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Summary record of the 56th meeting
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Chairman: Mr. Effah-Apenteng (Ghana)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

Contents

Agenda item 133: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*)

Agenda item 134: Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East (*continued*)

(b) United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (*continued*)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 133: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*) (A/56/789, A/56/882, A/56/885, A/56/887, A/56/941; A/C.5/56/43)

1. **Mr. Halbwachs** (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the financial performance report of the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001 (A/56/882), said that the General Assembly had authorized the amount of $51.9 million gross for the period to cover the additional posts that had been recommended for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations by the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations. Expenditures had amounted to $53.4 million net, resulting in additional requirements of $1.4 million net, mainly as a result of underbudgeted resources for post and staff assessment costs. The details of expenditures were set out in table 1 and in annexes 1 and 2 to the report.

2. The proposed budget for the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2003 (A/56/885) amounted to $88.4 million net for 711 posts. The increase of $9.3 million net included the full costs for the 125 additional posts that had been approved by the General Assembly as well as for an additional medical officer and two nurses. He drew attention to the new results-based budgeting format in which the proposed budget had been presented.

3. In response to a request by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), the Secretary-General had prepared a report on instances for which the United Nations was entitled to restitution as the result of non-compliance with status-of-forces or other agreements (A/56/789). A compendium would be developed of instances that had arisen during the period from January 1993 to August 2001. The methodology and criteria for establishing the compendium were described in paragraphs 3 to 5 of the report.

4. He wished to draw attention, lastly, to the progress report on the write-off of contingent-owned equipment at liquidated missions contained in document A/C.5/56/43, which summarized the progress that had been made between July 2001 and April 2002. A total of 1,326 cases had been processed during that period, with 39 cases still pending. All the cases were expected to be processed by the end of 2002.

6. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the financial performance report for the period from 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001 and proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2003 for the support account for peacekeeping operations (A/56/941), drew attention to paragraph 6, in which the Committee recommended approval of the action proposed by the Secretary-General in paragraph 11 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/56/882). Part II of the report commented on the changed format of the support account presentation. The Advisory Committee welcomed the change and offered some suggestions for improvement. In the section beginning in paragraph 16, the Advisory Committee analysed the cost estimates proposed by the Secretary-General. On some posts, it maintained the position it had expressed in its earlier report on implementation of the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (Brahimi report) (A/56/478). In paragraph 23, the Committee recommended approval of the proposed D-2 post for the Director of Management. In paragraph 30, the Committee expressed the opinion that the time had come for the Secretariat to develop a methodology and monitoring system to evaluate the results of training programmes in peacekeeping operations. In paragraph 41, the Committee recommended approval of $100.6 million gross for total staffing and non-staffing requirements.

6. In paragraph 31 of the report of the Advisory Committee on the administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (A/56/887), the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should take note of the information contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/56/789).

7. **Mr. Bouheddou** (Algeria) said that his delegation appreciated the Advisory Committee's explanation for the late issuance of its report, but regretted that the number of late documents had continued to rise, mostly without the required explanation.

8. The Fifth Committee must cease to be a venue for rubber-stamping the recommendations of the Advisory Committee. While his delegation highly appreciated the work of that Committee and its expert members, the

Fifth Committee should not be content to play a passive role. As a deliberative and decision-making body, the Fifth Committee should be a forum for debate on administrative and budgetary questions.

9. His delegation welcomed the presentation of the support account budget in a results-based format as an important step towards rationalizing the support account budget in the context of the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the unprecedented increase in activities funded from the support account. It supported the recommendations contained in paragraphs 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/56/941) and would like to hear why the Secretariat had been unable to comply with the request contained in paragraph 12.

10. His delegation continued to believe that the implementation of the recommendations of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations and of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations was more than a simple budgetary exercise and required enhanced cooperation on the part of all the actors involved.

11. Lastly, with reference to paragraph 23 of the report, he would welcome clarification of the Advisory Committee's position regarding the two D-1 posts that had been proposed.

12. **Mr. Chandra** (India) said that no other department in the Secretariat besides the Department of Peacekeeping Operations had been able to increase its staffing by over 50 per cent. At a projected $102.3 million, gross resources for the support account were 71 per cent more for the period 2002-2003 than for 2000-2001. His delegation believed, therefore, that adequate resources had been provided to the Department and that it was time for it to measurably increase its productivity. The Department should be able to backstop peacekeeping activities, and the tens of millions of dollars spent on modernizing and upgrading equipment should result in savings based on efficiencies.

13. His delegation commended the Secretariat for the speedy transition to a results-based budgeting format and urged it to study and implement the useful recommendations of the Advisory Committee in that regard.

14. The increase of $12.57 million in the budget for the support account for the year ending 30 June 2002 had been attributed to the full 12-month costing of the additional 121 posts and related non-post resources approved in General Assembly resolution 56/241. That would entail all 121 posts being encumbered by the end of the coming month, yet the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/56/941, paragraphs 21 and 22) stated that 18 per cent of currently approved Professional posts remained unfilled. Furthermore, of the 91 additional posts that had been approved for peacekeeping, only 58 were occupied as at 27 March 2002. His delegation wished to know the distinction between "permanently" encumbered Professional posts and "temporarily" occupied posts. Additional details on the increase in the support account budget for the current period and on the need for an increase for 2002-2003 would also be useful.

15. The Director of the Peacekeeping Financing Division had noted that unspent balances from the peacekeeping budget had made it possible to provide full financing for the $146 million strategic deployment stocks project without additional assessments. He trusted that similar amounts would be identified to repay the arrears due to troop-contributing countries and to tackle other pressing financial problems facing the Organization, which the Secretariat itself had identified. With political commitment, finding technical solutions should not prove difficult.

16. Regarding the Secretariat's capacity for backstopping peacekeeping activities, it was useful to note that 12 of the 13 working days of the Committee during the second part of the Assembly's resumed session would be devoted to peacekeeping. A budget of around $2.7 billion was expected to be approved during that period. On the other hand, the Committee had spent 12 weeks approving the regular budget, which amounted each year to less than half the peacekeeping budget. The Committee should consider that fact in terms of the priorities of the Organization.

17. **Mr. Ho** (Singapore) inquired whether the listing of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) in the support account was related to the resident auditor functions, and if so, how many such auditors had been hired.

18. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), in reply to the representative of Algeria, agreed that the Committee should not be a rubber stamp for the Advisory Committee's decisions. In his

experience, it had never been. As a recent example, the Committee had disagreed with the Advisory Committee on the 2002-2003 budget, including on the question of the support accounts. As for the position of the Advisory Committee on the two D-1 posts, it was not recommending their approval.

Agenda item 134: Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East (*continued*)

(b) United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (*continued*) (A/C.5/56/L.70)

19. **Mr. Bhattarai** (Nepal), Vice-Chairman, reporting on the informal consultations held on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), said that, despite the efforts of many delegations, the consultations had not borne fruit; it had been impossible to reach consensus on a draft resolution.

20. **Mr. Pulido** (Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.70 on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and urged interested delegations to take part in informal consultations on the text.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.